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Mr Le Groves

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Frontispiece.

E. F. Burney del. *S. Fuller sculp.*

Listening with pleasing dread to the deep roar
Of the wide-weltering waves. ——

Minstrel. Book I. ver. LIV.

Published Oct. 1. 1796, by C. Dilly, London.

THE

MINSTREL;

OR,

THE PROGRESS OF GENIUS:

IN TWO BOOKS.

WITH

SOME OTHER POEMS.

BY

JAMES BEATTIE, LL. D.

London:

PRINTED BY T. GILLET,

FOR C. DILLY, IN THE POULTRY,

AND W. CREECH, EDINBURGH.

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29. APR. 1916
OXFORD

TO

MRS. MONTAGU,

THESE LITTLE POEMS,

NOW REVISED AND CORRECTED

FOR THE LAST TIME,

ARE,

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF

ESTEEM AND GRATITUDE,

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

JANUARY, 1777.

HAVING lately seen in print some poems ascribed to me, which I never wrote, and some of my own inaccurately copied, I thought it would not be improper to publish, in this little volume, all the verses of which I am willing to be considered as the author. Many others I did indeed write in the early part of my life; but they were in general so incorrect, that I would not rescue them from oblivion, even if a wish could do it.

Some of the few now offered to the Publick would perhaps have been suppressed, if in making this collection I had implicitly followed my own judgment. But in so small a matter who would refuse to submit his opinion to that of a friend?

It is of no consequence to the reader to know the date of any of these little poems. But some private reasons determine the author to add, that most of them were written many years ago, and that the greater part of the Minstrel, which is his latest attempt in this way, was composed in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight.

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PREFACE

TO

THE MINSTREL.

THE design was, to trace the progress of a Poetical Genius, born in a rude age, from the first dawning of fancy and reason, till that period at which he may be supposed capable of appearing in the world as A MINSTREL, that is, as an itinerant Poet and Musician;—a character which, according to the notions of our forefathers, was not only respectable, but sacred.

I have endeavoured to imitate SPENSER in the measure of his verse, and in the harmony, simplicity, and variety, of his composition. Antique expressions I have avoided; admitting, however, some old words, where they seemed to suit the subject: but I hope none will be found that are now obsolete, or in any degree not intelligible to a reader of English poetry.

To those, who may be disposed to ask, what could induce me to write in so difficult a measure, I can

only answer, that it pleases my ear, and seems, from its Gothick structure and original, to bear some relation to the subject and spirit of the Poem. It admits both simplicity and magnificence of sound and of language, beyond any other stanza that I am acquainted with. It allows the sententiousness of the couplet, as well as the more complex modulation of blank verse. What some criticks have remarked, of its uniformity growing at last tiresome to the ear, will be found to hold true, only when the poetry is faulty in other respects.

THE

MINSTREL:

OR,

THE PROGRESS OF GENIUS.

A POEM.

Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musæ,
Quarum sacra fero, ingenti perculsus amore,
Accipiant.—— VIRGIL.

BOOK I.

THE

MINSTREL:

OR,

THE PROGRESS OF GENIUS.

THE FIRST BOOK.

I.

AH! who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar;
Ah! who can tell how many a soul sublime
Has felt the influence of malignant star,
And waged with Fortune an eternal war;
Check'd by the scoff of Pride, by Envy's frown,
And Poverty's unconquerable bar,
In life's low vale remote has pined alone,
Then dropt into the grave, unpitied and unknown!

II.

And yet, the languor of inglorious days
Not equally oppressive is to all.
Him, who ne'er listen'd to the voice of praise,
The silence of neglect can ne'er appal.
There are, who, deaf to mad Ambition's call,
Would shrink to hear th' obstreperous trump of Fame;
Supremely blest, if to their portion fall
Health, competence, and peace. Nor higher aim
Had HE, whose simple tale these artless lines proclaim.

III.

The rolls of fame I will not now explore;
Nor need I here describe in learned lay,
How forth THE MINSTREL fared in days of yore,
Right glad of heart, though homely in array;
His waving locks and beard all hoary grey:
While from his bending shoulder, decent hung
His harp, the sole companion of his way,
Which to the whistling wind responsive rung:
And ever as he went some merry lay he sung.

IV.

Fret not thyself, thou glittering child of pride,
That a poor Villager inspires my strain;
With thee let Pageantry and Power abide:
The gentle Muses haunt the sylvan reign;
Where through wild groves at eve the lonely swain
Enraptured roams, to gaze on Nature's charms.
They hate the sensual, and scorn the vain,
The parasite their influence never warms,
Nor him whose sordid soul the love of gold alarms.

V.

Though richest hues the peacock's plumes adorn,
Yet horror screams from his discordant throat.
Rise, sons of harmony, and hail the morn,
While warbling larks on russet pinions float:
Or seek at noon the woodland scene remote,
Where the grey linnets carol from the hill.
O let them ne'er, with artificial note,
To please a tyrant, strain the little bill,
But sing what Heaven inspires, and wander where they will.

VI.

Liberal, not lavish, is kind Nature's hand;
Nor was perfection made for man below.
Yet all her schemes with nicest art are plann'd,
Good counteracting ill, and gladness wo.
With gold and gems if Chilian mountains glow;
If bleak and barren Scotia's hills arise;
There plague and poison, lust and rapine grow;
Here peaceful are the vales, and pure the skies,
And freedom fires the soul, and sparkles in the eyes.

VII.

Then grieve not, thou, to whom th' indulgent Muse
Vouchsafes a portion of celestial fire;
Nor blame the partial Fates, if they refuse
Th' imperial banquet, and the rich attire.
Know thine own worth, and reverence the lyre.
Wilt thou debase the heart which God refined?
No; let thy heaven-taught soul to heaven aspire,
To fancy, freedom, harmony, resign'd;
Ambition's groveling crew for ever left behind.

VIII.

Canst thou forego the pure ethereal soul
In each fine sense so exquisitely keen,
On the dull couch of Luxury to loll,
Stung with disease and stupified with spleen;
Fain to implore the aid of Flattery's screen,
Even from thyself thy loathsome heart to hide,
(The manſion then no more of joy serene)
Where fear, distrust, malevolence, abide,
And impotent desire, and disappointed pride?

IX.

O how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms which Nature to her vot'ry yields!
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven,
O how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven!

X.

These charms shall work thy soul's eternal health,
And love, and gentleness, and joy, impart.
But these thou must renounce, if lust of wealth
E'er win its way to thy corrupted heart;
For, ah! it poisons like a scorpion's dart;
Prompting th' ungenerous wish, the selfish scheme,
The stern resolve, unmoved by pity's smart,
The troublous day, and long distressful dream.——
Return, my roving Muse, resume thy purposed theme.

XI.

There liv'd in Gothic days, as legends tell,
A shepherd-swain, a man of low degree;
Whose sires, perchance, in Fairyland might dwell,
Sicilian groves, or vales of Arcady;
But he, I ween, was of the north countrie *:
A nation famed for song, and beauty's charms;
Zealous, yet modest; innocent, though free;
Patient of toil; serene amidst alarms;
Inflexible in faith; invincible in arms.

* There is hardly an ancient Ballad, or Romance, wherein a Minstrel or Harper appears, but he is characterised, by way of eminence, to have been "*Of the North Countrie.*" It is probable, that under this appellation were formerly comprehended all the provinces to the north of the Trent. *See Percy's Essay on the English Minstrels.*

XII.

The shepherd-swain of whom I mention made,
On Scotia's mountains fed his little flock;
The sickle, scythe, or plough, he never sway'd;
An honest heart was almost all his stock;
His drink the living water from the rock:
The milky dams supplied his board, and lent
Their kindly fleece to baffle winter's shock;
And he, though oft with dust and sweat besprent,
Did guide and guard their wanderings, whereso'er they went.

XIII.

From labour health, from health contentment springs.
Contentment opes the source of every joy.
He envied not, he never thought of, kings;
Nor from those appetites sustain'd annoy,
That chance may frustrate, or indulgence cloy:
Nor Fate his calm and humble hopes beguiled;
He mourn'd no recreant friend, nor mistress coy,
For on his vows the blameless Phœbe smiled,
And her alone he loved, and loved her from a child.

XIV.

No jealousy their dawn of love o'ercast,
Nor blasted were their wedded days with strife;
Each season look'd delightful, as it past,
To the fond husband, and the faithful wife.
Beyond the lowly vale of shepherd life
They never roam'd; secure beneath the storm
Which in ambition's lofty land is rife,
Where peace and love are canker'd by the worm
Of pride, each bud of joy industrious to deform.

XV.

The wight, whose tale these artless lines unfold,
Was all the offspring of this humble pair.
His birth no oracle or seer foretold:
No prodigy appear'd in earth or air,
Nor aught that might a strange event declare.
You guess each circumstance of EDWIN's birth;
The parent's transport, and the parent's care;
The gossip's prayer for wealth, and wit, and worth;
And one long summer-day of indolence and mirth.

XVI.

And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy;
Deep thought oft seem'd to fix his infant eye.
Dainties he heeded not, nor gaude, nor toy,
Save one short pipe of rudest minstrelsy.
Silent when glad; affectionate, though shy;
And now his look was most demurely sad,
And now he laugh'd aloud, yet none knew why.
The neighbours star'd and sigh'd, yet bless'd the lad:
Some deem'd him wond'rous wise, and some believ'd him mad.

XVII.

But why should I his childish feats display?
Concourse, and noise, and toil, he ever fled;
Nor cared to mingle in the clamorous fray
Of squabbling imps, but to the forest sped,
Or roam'd at large the lonely mountain's head;
Or, where the maze of some bewilder'd stream
To deep untrodden groves his footsteps led,
There would he wander wild, 'till Phœbus' beam,
Shot from the western cliff, released the weary team.

XVIII.

Th' exploit of strength, dexterity, or speed,
To him nor vanity nor joy could bring.
His heart, from cruel sport estranged, would bleed
To work the woe of any living thing,
By trap, or net; by arrow, or by sling;
These he detested, those he scorn'd to wield:
He wish'd to be the guardian, not the king,
Tyrant far less, or traitor of the field.
And sure the sylvan reign unbloody joy might yield.

XIX.

Lo! where the stripling, wrapt in wonder, roves
Beneath the precipice o'erhung with pine;
And sees, on high, amidst th' encircling groves,
From cliff to cliff the foaming torrents shine:
While waters, woods, and winds, in concert join,
And Echo swells the chorus to the skies.
Would Edwin this majestic scene resign
For aught the huntsman's puny craft supplies?
Ah! no: the better knows great Nature's charms to prize.

XX.

And oft he traced the uplands, to survey,
When o'er the sky advanced the kindling dawn,
The crimson cloud, blue main, and mountain grey,
And lake, dim-gleaming on the smoky lawn;
Far to the west the long, long vale withdrawn,
Where twilight loves to linger for a while;
And now he faintly kens the bounding fawn,
And villager abroad at early toil.—
But, lo! the sun appears! and heaven, earth, ocean, smile.

XXI.

And oft the craggy cliff he loved to climb,
When all in mist the world below was lost.
What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,
Like shipwreck'd mariner on desert coast,
And view th' enormous waste of vapour, tost
In billows, lengthening to th' horizon round,
Now scoop'd in gulphs, with mountains now emboss'd!
And hear the voice of mirth and song rebound,
Flocks, herds, and waterfalls, along the hoar profound!

XXII.

In truth he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle, and each dreadful scene.
In darkness, and in storm, he found delight:
Nor less, than when on ocean wave serene
The southern sun diffused his dazzling shene.
Even sad vicissitude amused his soul:
And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,
And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,
A sigh, a tear, so sweet, he wish'd not to controul.

XXIII.

"O ye wild groves, O where is now your bloom!"
(The Muse interprets thus his tender thought.)
"Your flowers, your verdure, and your balmy gloom,
"Of late so grateful in the hour of drought!
"Why do the birds, that song and rapture brought
"To all your bowers, their mansions now forsake?
"Ah! why has fickle chance this ruin wrought?
"For now the storm howls mournful thro' the brake,
"And the dead foliage flies in many a shapeless flake.

XXIV.

" Where now the rill, melodious, pure, and cool,
" And meads, with life, and mirth, and beauty crown'd!
" Ah! see, th' unsightly slime, and sluggish pool,
" Have all the solitary vale imbrown'd;
" Fled each fair form, and mute each melting sound,
" The raven croaks forlorn on naked spray:
" And, hark! the river, bursting every mound,
" Down the vale thunders; and with wasteful sway,
" Uproots the grove, and rolls the shatter'd rocks away.

XXV.

" Yet such the destiny of all on earth:
" So flourishes and fades majestic Man.
" Fair is the bud his vernal morn brings forth,
" And fostering gales a while the nursling fan.
" O smile, ye heavens, serene; ye mildews wan,
" Ye blighting whirlwinds, spare his balmy prime,
" Nor lessen of his life the little span.
" Born on the swift, though silent, wings of Time,
" Old-age comes on apace to ravage all the clime.

XXVI.

"And be it so. Let those deplore their doom,
"Whose hope still grovels in this dark sojourn.
"But lofty souls, who look beyond the tomb,
"Can smile at Fate, and wonder how they mourn.
"Shall spring to these sad scenes no more return?
"Is yonder wave the sun's eternal bed?—
"Soon shall the orient with new lustre burn,
"And spring shall soon her vital influence shed,
"Again attune the grove, again adorn the mead.

XXVII.

"Shall I be left abandon'd in the dust,
"When Fate, relenting, lets the flower revive?
"Shall Nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
"Bid him, though doom'd to perish, hope to live?
"Is it for this fair Virtue oft must strive
"With disappointment, penury, and pain?—
"No: Heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive;
"And man's majestic beauty bloom again,
"Bright thro' the eternal year of Love's triumphant reign."

XXVIII.

This truth sublime his simple sire had taught,
In sooth, 'twas almost all the shepherd knew,
No subtle nor superfluous lore he sought,
Nor ever wish'd his Edwin to pursue.
" Let man's own sphere (quoth he) confine his view,
" Be man's peculiar work his sole delight."
And much, and oft, he warn'd him, to eschew
Falsehood and guile, and aye maintain the right,
By pleasure unseduced, unawed by lawless might.

XXIX.

" And, from the prayer of Want, and plaint of Wo,
" O never, never turn away thine ear,
" Forlorn in this bleak wilderness below,
" Ah! what were man, should Heaven refuse to hear!
" To others do (the law is not severe)
" What to thyself thou wishest to be done.
" Forgive thy foes; and love thy parents dear,
" And friends, and native land; nor those alone;
" All human weal and wo learn thou to make thine own."

XXX.

See in the rear of the warm sunny shower,
The visionary boy from shelter fly!
For now the storm of summer-rain is o'er,
And cool, and fresh, and fragrant, is the sky!
And, lo! in the dark east, expanded high,
The rainbow brightens to the setting sun;
Fond fool, that deem'st the streaming glory nigh,
How vain the chace thine ardor has begun!
'Tis fled afar, ere half thy purposed race be run.

XXXI.

Yet couldst thou learn, that thus it fares with age,
When pleasure, wealth, or power, the bosom warm,
This baffled hope might tame thy manhood's rage,
And disappointment of her sting disarm.—
But why should foresight thy fond heart alarm?
Perish the lore that deadens young desire!
Pursue, poor imp, th' imaginary charm,
Indulge gay Hope, and Fancy's pleasing fire:
Fancy and Hope too soon shall of themselves expire.

XXXII.

When the long-sounding curfew from afar
Loaded with loud lament the lonely gale,
Young Edwin, lighted by the evening star,
Lingering and listening, wander'd down the vale.
There would he dream of graves, and corses pale;
And ghosts, that to the charnel-dungeon throng,
And drag a length of clanking chain, and wail,
Till silenc'd by the owl's terrific song,
Or blast that shrieks by fits the shuddering isles along.

XXXIII.

Or, when the setting moon, in crimson dyed,
Hung o'er the dark and melancholy deep,
To haunted stream, remote from man he hied,
Where Fays of yore their revels wont to keep;
And there let Fancy roam at large, till sleep
A vision brought to his intranced sight.
And first, a wildly-murmuring wind 'gan creep
Shrill to his ringing ear; then tapers bright,
With instantaneous gleam, illumed the vault of Night.

XXXIV.

Anon in view a portal's blazon'd arch
Arose; the trumpet bids the valves unfold;
And forth an host of little warriors march,
Grasping the diamond lance, and targe of gold.
Their look was gentle, their demeanour bold,
And green their helms, and green their silk attire:
And here and there, right venerably old,
The long-rob'd minstrels wake the warbling wire,
And some with mellow breath the martial pipe inspire.

XXXV.

With merriment, and song, and timbrels clear,
A troop of dames from myrtle bowers advance;
The little warriors doff the targe and spear,
And loud enlivening strains provoke the dance.
They meet, they dart away, they wheel askance;
To right, to left, they thrid the flying maze;
Now bound aloft with vigorous spring, then glance
Rapid along: with many-colour'd rays
Of tapers, gems, and gold, the echoing forests blaze.

XXXVI.

The dream is fled. Proud harbinger of day,
Who scaredst the vision with thy clarion shrill,
Fell chanticleer! who oft hast reft away
My fancied good, and brought substantial ill!
O to thy cursed scream, discordant still,
Let Harmony aye shut her gentle ear:
Thy boastful mirth let jealous rivals spill,
Insult thy crest, and glossy pinions tear,
And ever in thy dreams the ruthless fox appear.

XXXVII.

Forbear, my Muse. Let Love attune thy line.
Revoke the spell. Thine Edwin frets not so.
For how should he at wicked chance repine,
Who feels from every change amusement flow?
Even now his eyes with smiles of rapture glow,
As on he wanders through the scenes of morn,
Where the fresh flowers in living lustre blow,
Where thousand pearls the dewy lawns adorn,
A thousand notes of joy in every breeze are born.

XXXVIII.

But who the melodies of morn can tell?
The wild brook babbling down the mountain side;
The lowing herd; the sheepfold's simple bell;
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
In the lone valley; echoing far and wide
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above;
The hollow murmur of the ocean-tide;
The hum of bees, and linnet's lay of love,
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

XXXIX.

The cottage-curs at early pilgrim bark;
Crown'd with her pail the tripping milkmaid sings;
The whistling plowman stalks afield; and, hark!
Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings;
Through rustling corn the hare astonish'd springs;
Slow tolls the village-clock the drowsy hour;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequester'd bower,
And shrill lark carols clear from her aëreal tour.

XL.

O Nature, how in every charm supreme!
Whose votaries feast on raptures ever new!
O for the voice and fire of seraphim,
To sing thy glories with devotion due!
Blest be the day I 'scaped the wrangling crew,
From Pyrrho's maze, and Epicurus' sty;
And held high converse with the godlike few,
Who to th' enraptur'd heart, and ear, and eye,
Teach beauty, virtue, truth, and love, and melody.

XLI.

Hence! ye, who snare and stupefy the mind,
Sophists, of beauty, virtue, joy, the bane!
Greedy and fell, though impotent and blind,
Who spread your filthy nets in Truth's fair fane,
And ever ply your venom'd fangs amain!
Hence to dark Error's den, whose rankling slime
First gave you form! hence! lest the Muse should deign,
(Though loth on theme so mean to waste a rhyme),
With vengeance to pursue your sacrilegious crime.

XLII.

But hail, ye mighty masters of the lay,
Nature's true sons, the friends of man and truth!
Whose song, sublimely sweet, serenely gay,
Amused my childhood, and inform'd my youth.
O let your spirit still my bosom sooth,
Inspire my dreams, and my wild wanderings guide!
Your voice each rugged path of life can smooth;
For well I know, where-ever ye reside,
There harmony, and peace, and innocence, abide.

XLIII.

Ah me! abandon'd on the lonesome plain,
As yet poor Edwin never knew your lore,
Save when against the winter's drenching rain,
And driving snow, the cottage shut the door.
Then, as instructed by tradition hoar,
Her legends when the Beldam 'gan impart,
Or chant the old heroic ditty o'er,
Wonder and joy ran thrilling to his heart;
Much he the tale admired, but more the tuneful art.

XLIV.

Various and strange was the long-winded tale;
And halls, and knights, and feats of arms, display'd;
Or merry swains, who quaff the nut-brown ale,
And sing, enamour'd of the-nut-brown maid;
The moon-light revel of the fairy glade;
Or hags, that suckle an infernal brood,
And ply in caves th' unutterable trade*,
'Midst fiends and spectres, quench the moon in blood,
Yell in the midnight storm, or ride th' infuriate flood.

XLV.

But when to horror his amazement rose,
A gentler strain the Beldam would rehearse,
A tale of rural life, a tale of woes,
The orphan-babes, and guardian uncle fierce.
O cruel! will no pang of pity pierce
That heart by lust of lucre sear'd to stone!
For sure, if aught of virtue last, or verse,
To latest times shall tender souls bemoan
Those helpless orphan-babes by thy fell arts undone.

* Allusion to *Shakespear.*
Macbeth. How now, ye secret, black, and midnight hags,
What is't you do?
Witches. A deed *without a name.* *Macbeth, Act IV. Scene* 1.

XLVI.

Behold, with berries smear'd, with brambles torn*,
The babes now famish'd lay them down to die,
'Midst the wild howl of darksome woods forlorn,
Folded in one another's arms they lie;
Nor friend, nor stranger, hears their dying cry:
"For from the town the man returns no more."
But thou, who Heaven's just vengeance darest defy,
This deed with fruitless tears shalt soon deplore,
When Death lays waste thy house, and flames consume thy store.

XLVII.

A stifled smile of stern vindictive joy
Brighten'd one moment Edwin's starting tear.—
"But why should gold man's feeble mind decoy,
"And innocence thus die by doom severe?"
O Edwin! while thy heart is yet sincere,
Th' assaults of discontent and doubt repel:
Dark even at noontide is our mortal sphere;
But let us hope,——to doubt, is to rebel,——
Let us exult in hope, that all shall yet be well.

* See the fine old ballad, called, *The Children in the Wood.*

XLVIII.

Nor be thy generous indignation check'd,
Nor check'd the tender tear to Misery given;
From Guilt's contagious power shall that protect,
This soften and refine the soul for Heaven.
But dreadful is their doom, whom doubt has driven
To censure Fate, and pious Hope forego:
Like yonder blasted boughs by lightning riven,
Perfection, beauty, life, they never know,
But frown on all that pass, a monument of wo.

XLIX.

Shall he, whose birth, maturity, and age,
Scarce fill the circle of one summer day,
Shall the poor gnat with discontent and rage
Exclaim, that Nature hastens to decay,
If but a cloud obstruct the solar ray,
If but a momentary shower descend!
Or shall frail man Heaven's dread decree gainsay,
Which bade the series of events extend
Wide through unnumber'd worlds, and ages without end!

L.

One part, one little part, we dimly scan
Through the dark medium of life's feverish drear
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,
If but that little part incongruous seem.
Nor is that part perhaps what mortals deem;
Oft from apparent ill our blessings rise.
O then renounce that impious self-esteem,
That aims to trace the secrets of the skies:
For thou art but of dust; be humble, and be wise.

LI.

Thus Heaven enlarged his soul in riper years.
For Nature gave him strength and fire, to soar
On Fancy's wing above this vale of tears;
Where dark cold-hearted sceptics, creeping, pore
Through microscope of metaphysic lore:
And much they grope for truth, but never hit.
For why? their powers, inadequate before,
This art preposterous renders more unfit;
Yet deem they darkness light, and their vain blunders wit.

LII.

Nor was this ancient dame a foe to mirth.
Her ballad, jest, and riddle's quaint device
Oft cheer'd the shepherds round their social hearth;
Whom levity or spleen could ne'er entice
To purchase chat or laughter, at the price
Of decency. Nor let it faith exceed,
That Nature forms a rustic taste so nice.
Ah! had they been of court or city breed,
Such delicacy were right marvellous indeed.

LIII.

Oft when the winter-storm had ceased to rave,
He roam'd the snowy waste at even, to view
The cloud stupendous, from th' Atlantic wave
High-towering, sail along th' horizon blue:
Where 'midst the changeful scenery ever new
Fancy a thousand wondrous forms descries
More wildly great than ever pencil drew,
Rocks, torrents, gulfs, and shapes of giant size,
And glittering cliffs on cliffs, and fiery ramparts rise.

LIV.

Thence musing onward to the sounding shore,
The lone enthusiast oft would take his way,
Listening with pleasing dread to the deep roar
Of the wide-weltering waves. In black array
When sulphurous clouds roll'd on the vernal day,
Even then he hasten'd from the haunt of man,
Along the trembling wilderness to stray,
What time the lightning's fierce career began,
And o'er Heaven's rending arch the rattling thunder ran.

LV.

Responsive to the sprightly pipe when all
In sprightly dance the village-youth were join'd,
Edwin, of melody aye held in thrall,
From the rude gambol far remote reclined,
Sooth'd with the soft notes warbling in the wind.
Ah then, all jollity seem'd noise and folly.
To the pure soul by Fancy's fire refined,
Ah what is mirth but turbulence unholy,
When with the charm compared of heavenly melancholy!

F. Hurney del. S. Neagle f.

Responsive to the sprightly pipe when all
In sprightly dance the village youth were join'd,
Edwin, of melody aye held in thrall,
From the rude gambol far remote reclin'd.

Minstrel B.I. v. 55.

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LVI.

Is there a heart that music cannot melt?
Alas! how is that rugged heart forlorn!
Is there, who ne'er those mystic transports felt
Of solitude and melancholy born?
He needs not woo the Muse; he is her scorn.
The sophist's rope of cobweb he shall twine;
Mope o'er the schoolman's peevish page; or mourn,
And delve for life in Mammon's dirty mine;
Sneak with the scoundrel fox, or grunt with glutton swine.

LVII.

For Edwin Fate a nobler doom had plann'd;
Song was his favourite and first pursuit.
The wild harp rang to his adventurous hand,
And languish'd to his breath the plaintive flute.
His infant muse, though artless, was not mute:
Of elegance as yet he took no care;
For this of time and culture is the fruit;
And Edwin gain'd at last this fruit so rare:
As in some future verse I purpose to declare.

LVIII.

Meanwhile, whate'er of beautiful, or new,
Sublime, or dreadful, in earth, sea, or sky,
By chance, or search, was offer'd to his view,
He scan'd with curious and romantic eye.
Whate'er of lore tradition could supply
From Gothic tale, or song, or fable old,
Roused him, still keen to listen and to pry.
At last, though long by penury control'd,
And solitude, his soul her graces 'gan unfold.

LIX.

Thus on the chill Lapponian's dreary land,
For many a long month lost in snow profound,
When Sol from Cancer sends the season bland,
And in their northern cave the storms are bound;
From silent mountains, straight, with startling sound,
Torrents are hurl'd; green hills emerge; and lo,
The trees with foliage, cliffs with flowers are crown'd;
Pure rills through vales of verdure warbling go;
And wonder, love, and joy, the peasant's heart o'erflow*.

* Spring and Autumn are hardly known to the Laplanders. About the time the sun enters Cancer, their fields, which a week before were covered with snow, appear on a sudden full of grass and flowers. *Scheffer's History of Lapland, p.* 16.

LX.

Here pause, my Gothic lyre, a little while.
The leisure hour is all that thou canst claim.
But if ***** on this labour smile,
New strains erelong shall animate thy frame.
And his applause to me is more than fame;
For still with truth accords his taste refined.
At lucre or renown let others aim,
I only wish to please the gentle mind,
Whom Nature's charms inspire, and love of humankind.

THE

MINSTREL:

OR,

THE PROGRESS OF GENIUS.

A POEM.

Doctrina sed vim promovet insitam,
Rectique cultus pectora roborant. HORAT.

BOOK II.

THE

MINSTREL:

OR,

THE PROGRESS OF GENIUS.

THE SECOND BOOK.

I.

OF chance or change O let not man complain,
Else shall he never never cease to wail:
For, from th' imperial dome, to where the swain
Rears the lone cottage in the silent dale,
All feel th' assault of fortune's fickle gale;
Art, empire, earth itself, to change are doom'd;
Earthquakes have raised to heaven the humble vale,
And gulphs the mountain's mighty mass entomb'd,
And where th' Atlantic rolls wide continents have bloom'd*.

* See *Plato*'s Timeus.

II.

But sure to foreign climes we need not range,
Nor search the ancient records of our race,
To learn the dire effects of time and change,
Which in ourselves, alas! we daily trace.
Yet at the darken'd eye, the wither'd face,
Or hoary hair, I never will repine:
But spare, O Time, whate'er of mental grace,
Of candour, love, or sympathy divine,
Whate'er of fancy's ray, or friendship's flame is mine.

III.

So I, obsequious to Truth's dread command,
Shall here without reluctance change my lay,
And smite the Gothic lyre with harsher hand;
Now when I leave that flowery path for aye
Of childhood, where I sported many a day,
Warbling and sauntering carelessly along;
Where every face was innocent and gay,
Each vale romantic, tuneful every tongue,
Sweet, wild, and artless all, as Edwin's infant song.

IV.

"Perish the lore that deadens young desire"
Is the soft tenor of my song no more.
Edwin, though loved of Heaven, must not aspire
To bliss, which mortals never knew before.
On trembling wings let youthful fancy soar,
Nor always haunt the sunny realms of joy;
But now and then the shades of life explore;
Though many a sound and sight of wo annoy,
And many a qualm of care his rising hopes destroy.

V.

Vigour from toil, from trouble patience grows.
The weakly blossom, warm in summer bower,
Some tints of transient beauty may disclose;
But ah it withers in the chilling hour.
Mark yonder oaks! Superior to the power
Of all the warring winds of heaven they rise,
And from the stormy promontory tower,
And toss their giant arms amid the skies,
While each assailing blast increase of strength supplies.

VI.

And now the downy cheek and deepen'd voice
Gave dignity to Edwin's blooming prime;
And walks of wider circuit were his choice,
And vales more wild, and mountains more sublime.
One evening, as he framed the careless rhyme,
It was his chance to wander far abroad,
And o'er a lonely eminence to climb,
Which heretofore his foot had never trode;
A vale appear'd below, a deep retired abode.

VII.

Thither he hied, enamour'd of the scene:
For rocks on rocks piled, as by magic spell,
Here scorch'd with lightning, there with ivy green,
Fenced from the north and east this savage dell;
Southward a mountain rose with easy swell,
Whose long long groves eternal mumur made;
And toward the western sun a streamlet fell,
Where, through the cliffs, the eye, remote, survey'd
Blue hills, and glittering waves, and skies in gold array'd.

VIII.

Along this narrow valley you might see
The wild deer sporting on the meadow ground,
And, here and there, a solitary tree,
Or mossy stone, or rock with woodbine crown'd.
Oft did the cliffs reverberate the sound
Of parted fragments tumbling from on high;
And from the summit of that craggy mound
The perching eagle oft was heard to cry,
Or on resounding wings to shoot athwart the sky.

IX.

One cultivated spot there was, that spread
Its flowery bosom to the noonday beam,
Where many a rose-bud rears its blushing head,
And herbs for food with future plenty teem.
Sooth'd by the lulling sound of grove and stream
Romantic visions swarm on Edwin's soul:
He minded not the sun's last trembling gleam,
Nor heard from far the twilight curfew toll;—
When slowly on his ear these moving accents stole.

X.

" Hail, awful scenes, that calm the troubled breast,
" And woo the weary to profound repose;
" Can Passion's wildest uproar lay to rest,
" And whisper comfort to the man of woes!
" Here Innocence may wander, safe from foes,
" And Contemplation soar on seraph wings.
" O Solitude, the man who thee foregoes,
" When lucre lures him, or ambition stings,
" Shall never know the source whence real grandeur springs.

XI.

" Vain man, is grandeur given to gay attire?
" Then let the butterfly thy pride upbraid:—
" To friends, attendants, armies, bought with hire?
" It is thy weakness that requires their aid:—
" To palaces, with gold and gems inlay'd?
" They fear the thief, and tremble in the storm:—
" To hosts, through carnage who to conquest wade?
" Behold the victor vanquish'd by the worm!
" Behold, what deeds of wo the locust can perform!

XII.

" True dignity is his, whose tranquil mind
" Virtue has raised above the things below,
" Who, every hope and fear to heaven resign'd,
" Shrinks not, though Fortune aim her deadliest blow."
—This strain from midst the rocks was heard to flow
In solemn sounds. Now beam'd the evening star;
And from embattled clouds emerging slow,
Cynthia came riding on her silver car;
And hoary mountain-cliffs shone faintly from afar.

XIII.

Soon did the solemn voice its theme renew;
(While Edwin wrapt in wonder listening stood)
" Ye tools and toys of tyranny, adieu,
" Scorn'd by the wise, and hated by the good!
" Ye only can engage the servile brood
" Of Levity and Lust, who, all their days,
" Ashamed of truth and liberty, have woo'd,
" And hugg'd the chain, that glittering on their gaze
Seems to outshine the pomp of heaven's empyreal blaze.

XIV.

" Like them, abandon'd to Ambition's sway,
" I sought for glory in the paths of guile;
" And fawn'd and smiled, to plunder and betray,
" Myself betray'd and plunder'd all the while;
" So gnaw'd the viper the corroding file.
" But now with pangs of keen remorse I rue
" Those years of trouble and debasement vile.—
" Yet why should I this cruel theme pursue!
" Fly, fly, detested thoughts, for ever from my view.

XV.

" The gusts of appetite, the clouds of care,
" And storms of disappointment, all o'erpast,
" Henceforth no earthly hope with heaven shall share
" This heart, where peace serenely shines at last.
" And if for me no treasure be amass'd,
" And if no future age shall hear my name,
" I lurk the more secure from fortune's blast,
" And with more leisure feed this pious flame,
" Whose rapture far transcends the fairest hopes of fame.

XVI.

" The end and the reward of toil is rest.
" Be all my prayer for virtue and for peace.
" Of wealth and fame, of pomp and power possess'd,
" Who ever felt his weight of wo decrease!
" Ah! what avails the lore of Rome and Greece,
" The lay heaven-prompted, and harmonious string,
" The dust of Ophir, or the Tyrian fleece,
" All that art, fortune, enterprise, can bring,
" If envy, scorn, remorse, or pride the bosom wring!

XVII.

" Let Vanity adorn the marble tomb
" With trophies, rhymes, and scutcheons of renown,
" In the deep dungeon of some Gothic dome,
" Where night and desolation ever frown.
" Mine be the breezy hill that skirts the down;
" Where a green grassy turf is all I crave,
" With here and there a violet bestrown,
" Fast by a brook, or fountain's murmuring wave;
" And many an evening sun shine sweetly on my grave.

XVIII.

"And thither let the village swain repair;
"And, light of heart, the village maiden gay,
"To deck with flowers her half-dishevel'd hair,
"And celebrate the merry morn of May.
"There let the shepherd's pipe the live-long day,
"Fill all the grove with love's bewitching wo;
"And when mild Evening comes with mantle grey,
"Let not the blooming band make haste to go,
"No ghost nor spell my long and last abode shall know.

XIX.

"For though I fly to scape from Fortune's rage,
"And bear the scars of envy, spite, and scorn,
"Yet with mankind no horrid war I wage,
"Yet with no impious spleen my breast is torn:
"For virtue lost, and ruin'd man, I mourn.
"O Man, creation's pride, heaven's darling child,
"Whom nature's best, divinest gifts adorn,
"Why from thy home are truth and joy exiled,
"And all thy favourite haunts with blood and tears defiled!

XX.

"Along yon glittering sky what glory streams!
"What majesty attends night's lovely queen!
"Fair laugh our vallies in the vernal beams;
"And mountains rise, and oceans roll between,
"And all conspire to beautify the scene.
"But, in the mental world, what chaos drear!
"What forms of mournful, loathsome, furious mien!
"O when shall that Eternal Morn appear,
"These dreadful forms to chase, this chaos dark to clear!

XXI.

"O Thou, at whose creative smile, yon heaven,
"In all the pomp of beauty, life, and light,
"Rose from th' abyss; when dark Confusion, driven
"Down down the bottomless profound of night,
"Fled, where he ever flies thy piercing sight!
"O glance on these sad shades one pitying ray,
"To blast the fury of oppressive might,
"Melt the hard heart to love and mercy's sway,
"And chear the wandering soul, and light him on the way."

XXII.

Silence ensued: and Edwin raised his eyes
In tears, for grief lay heavy at his heart.
"And is it thus in courtly life" (he cries)
"That man to man acts a betrayer's part!
"And dares he thus the gifts of Heaven pervert,
"Each social instinct, and sublime desire!—
"Hail Poverty! if honour, wealth, and art,
"If what the great pursue, and learn'd admire,
"Thus dissipate and quench the soul's ethereal fire!"

XXIII.

He said, and turn'd away; nor did the Sage
O'erhear, in silent orisons employ'd.
The Youth, his rising sorrow to assuage,
Home as he hied, the evening scene enjoy'd:
For now no cloud obscures the starry void;
The yellow moonlight sleeps on all the hills;
Nor in the mind with startling sounds annoy'd,
A soothing murmur the lone region fills
Of groves, and dying gales, and melancholy rills.

P. 49.

E. F. Burney del. J. Sutton sculp.

And, kneeling, tick'd the witherd hand, that tied
A wreathe of woodbine round his antlers tall.

Minstrel Book 2. ver. XXV.

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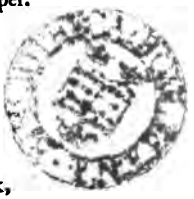
XXIV.

But he from day to day more anxious grew.
The voice still seem'd to vibrate on his ear,
Nor durst he hope the Hermit's tale untrue;
For Man he seem'd to love, and Heaven to fear;
And none speaks false, where there is none to hear.
" Yet, can man's gentle heart become so fell!
" No more in vain conjecture let me wear
" My hours away, but seek the Hermit's cell;
" 'Tis he my doubt can clear, perhaps my care dispel."

XXV.



At early dawn the Youth his journey took,
And many a mountain pass'd, and valley wide,
Then reach'd the wild; where, in a flowery nook,
And seated on a mossy stone, he spied
An antient man: his harp lay him beside.
A stag sprang from the pasture at his call,
And, kneeling, lick'd the wither'd hand, that tied
A wreathe of woodbine round his antlers tall,
And hung his lofty neck with many a floweret small.

XXVI.

And now the hoary Sage arose, and saw
The wanderer approaching: innocence
Smiled on his glowing cheek, but modest awe
Depress'd his eye, that fear'd to give offence.
" Who art thou, courteous stranger? and from whence?
" Why roam thy steps to this abandon'd dale?"
" A shepherd-boy (the Youth replied) far hence
" My habitation; hear my artless tale;
" Nor levity nor falshood shall thine ear assail.

XXVII.

" Late as I roam'd, intent on Nature's charms,
" I reach'd at eve this wilderness profound;
" And, leaning where yon oak expands her arms,
" Heard these rude cliffs thine awful voice rebound,
" (For in thy speech I recognise the sound.)
" You mourn'd for ruin'd man, and virtue lost,
" And seem'd to feel of keen remorse the wound,
" Pondering on former days, by guilt engross'd,
" Or in the giddy storm of dissipation toss'd.

XXVIII.

" But say, in courtly life can craft be learn'd,
" Where knowledge opens, and exalts the soul?
" Where Fortune lavishes her gifts unearn'd,
" Can selfishness the liberal heart control?
" Is glory there achiev'd by arts, as foul,
" As those which felons, fiends, and furies plan?
" Spiders ensnare, snakes poison, tygers prowl;
" Love is the godlike attribute of man.
" O teach a simple Youth this mystery to scan.

XXIX.

" Or else the lamentable strain disclaim,
" And give me back the calm, contented mind;
" Which, late, exulting, view'd, in Nature's frame,
" Goodness untainted, wisdom unconfined,
" Grace, grandeur, and utility combined.
" Restore those tranquil days, that saw me still
" Well pleased with all, but most with humankind;
" When Fancy roam'd through Nature's works at will,
" Uncheck'd by cold distrust, and uninform'd of ill."

XXX.

"Wouldst thou (the Sage replied) in peace return
"To the gay dreams of fond romantic youth,
"Leave me to hide, in this remote sojourn,
"From every gentle ear the dreadful truth:
"For if my desultory strain with ruth
"And indignation make thine eyes o'erflow,
"Alas! what comfort could thy anguish sooth,
"Shouldst thou th' extent of human folly know.
"Be ignorance thy choice, where knowledge leads to wo.

XXXI.

"But let untender thoughts afar be driven;
"Nor venture to arraign the dread decree:
"For know, to man, as candidate for heaven,
"The voice of The Eternal said, Be free;
"And this divine prerogative to thee
"Does virtue, happiness, and heaven convey;
"For virtue is the child of liberty,
"And happiness of virtue; nor can they
"Be free to keep the path who are not free to stray.

XXXII.

" Yet leave me not. I would allay that grief,
" Which else might thy young virtue overpower;
" And in thy converse I shall find relief,
" When the dark shades of melancholy lower;
" For solitude has many a dreary hour,
" Even when exempt from grief, remorse, and pain;
" Come often then; for, haply, in my bower,
" Amusement, knowledge, wisdom thou may'st gain.
" If I one soul improve, I have not lived in vain."

XXXIII.

And now, at length, to Edwin's ardent gaze
The Muse of history unrolls her page.
But few, alas! the scenes her art displays,
To charm his fancy, or his heart engage.
Here Chiefs their thirst of power in blood assuage,
And straight their flames with tenfold fierceness burn:
Here smiling Virtue prompts the patriot's rage,
But lo, erelong, is left alone to mourn,
And languish in the dust, and clasp th' abandon'd urn.

XXXIV.

"Ah, what avails (he said) to trace the springs,
"That whirl of empire the stupendous wheel!
"Ah, what have I to do with conquering kings,
"Hands drench'd in blood, and breasts begirt with steel!
"To those, whom Nature taught to think and feel,
"Heroes, alas! are things of small concern.
"Could History man's secret heart reveal,
"And what imports a heaven-born mind to learn,
"Her transcripts to explore what bosom would not yearn?

XXXV.

"This praise, O Cheronean Sage*, is thine.
"(Why should this praise to thee alone belong!)
"All else from Nature's moral path decline,
"Lured by the toys that captivate the throng;
"To herd in cabinets and camps, among
"Spoil, carnage, and the cruel pomp of pride;
"Or chaunt of heraldry the drowsy song,
"How tyrant blood, o'er many a region wide,
"Rolls to a thousand thrones its execrable tide.

* Plutarch.

XXXVI.

" O who of man the story will unfold,
" Ere victory and empire wrought annoy,
" In that elysian age (misnamed of gold)
" The age of love, and innocence, and joy,
" When all were great and free! man's sole employ
" To deck the bosom of his parent earth;
" Or toward his bower the murmuring stream decoy,
" To aid the floweret's long-expected birth,
" And lull the bed of peace, and crown the board of mirth.

XXXVII.

" Sweet were your shades, O ye primeval groves,
" Whose boughs to man his food and shelter lent,
" Pure in his pleasures, happy in his loves,
" His eye still smiling, and his heart content.
" Then, hand in hand, Health, Sport, and Labour went.
" Nature supply'd the wish she taught to crave.
" None prowl'd for prey, none watch'd to circumvent.
" To all an equal lot heaven's bounty gave:
" No vassal fear'd his lord, no tyrant fear'd his slave.

XXXVIII.

" But ah! th' Historic Muse has never dared
" To pierce those hallow'd bowers: 'tis Fancy's beam
" Pour'd on the vision of th' enraptured Bard,
" That paints the charms of that delicious theme.
" Then hail sweet Fancy's ray! and hail the dream
" That weans the weary soul from guilt and wo!
" Careless what others of my choice may deem,
" I long where Love and Fancy lead to go,
" And meditate on heaven; enough of earth I know."

XXXIX.

" I cannot blame thy choice (the Sage replied)
" For soft and smooth are Fancy's flowery ways.
" And yet even there, if left without a guide,
" The young adventurer unsafely plays.
" Eyes dazzled long by Fiction's gaudy rays
" In modest Truth no light nor beauty find.
" And who, my child, would trust the meteor-blaze,
" That soon must fail, and leave the wanderer blind,
" More dark and helpless far, than if it ne'er had shined?

XL.

" Fancy enervates, while it sooths, the heart,
" And, while it dazzles, wounds the mental sight:
" To joy each heightening charm it can impart,
" But wraps the hour of wo in tenfold night.
" And often, where no real ills affright,
" Its visionary fiends, an endless train,
" Assail with equal or superior might,
" And through the throbbing heart, and dizzy brain,
" And shivering nerves, shoot stings of more than mortal
" pain.

XLI.

" And yet, alas! the real ills of life
" Claim the full vigour of a mind prepared,
" Prepared for patient, long, laborious strife,
" Its guide Experience, and Truth its guard.
" We fare on earth as other men have fared:
" Were they successful? Let not us despair.
" Was disappointment oft their sole reward?
" Yet shall their tale instruct, if it declare,
" How they have borne the load ourselves are doom'd to bear.

XLII.

" What charms th' Historic Muse adorn, from spoils,
" And blood, and tyrants, when she wings her flight,
" To hail the patriot Prince, whose pious toils
" Sacred to science, liberty, and right,
" And peace, through every age divinely bright
" Shall shine the boast and wonder of mankind!
" Sees yonder sun, from his meridian height,
" A lovelier scene, than Virtue thus enshrined
" In power, and man with man for mutual aid combined?

XLIII.

" Hail sacred Polity, by Freedom rear'd!
" Hail sacred Freedom, when by Law restrain'd!
" Without you what were man? A groveling herd
" In darkness, wretchedness, and want enchain'd.
" Sublimed by you, the Greek and Roman reign'd
" In arts unrivall'd; O, to latest days,
" In Albion may your influence unprofaned
" To godlike worth the generous bosom raise,
" And prompt the Sage's lore, and fire the Poet's lays!

XLIV.

" But now let other themes our care engage.
" For lo, with modest yet majestic grace,
" To curb Imagination's lawless rage,
" And from within the cherish'd heart to brace,
" Philosophy appears. The gloomy race
" By Indolence and moping Fancy bred,
" Fear, Discontent, Solicitude give place,
" And Hope and Courage brighten in their stead,
" While on the kindling soul her vital beams are shed.

XLV.

" Then waken from long lethargy to life *
" The seeds of happiness, and powers of thought;
" Then jarring appetites forego their strife,
" A strife by ignorance to madness wrought.
" Pleasure by savage man is dearly bought
" With fell revenge, lust that defies controul,
" With gluttony and death. The mind untaught
" Is a dark waste, where fiends and tempests howl;
" As Phœbus to the world, is Science to the soul.

* The influence of the Philosophic Spirit, in humanizing the mind, and preparing it for intellectual exertion and delicate pleasure;—in exploring, by the help of geometry,

XLVI.

" And Reason now through Number, Time, and Space,
" Darts the keen lustre of her serious eye,
" And learns, from facts compared, the laws to trace,
" Whose long progression leads to Deity.
" Can mortal strength presume to soar so high!
" Can mortal sight, so oft bedim'd with tears,
" Such glory bear!—for lo, the shadows fly
" From nature's face; Confusion disappears,
" And order charms the eyes, and harmony the ears.

XLVII.

" In the deep windings of the grove, no more
" The hag obscene, and griesly phantom dwell;
" Nor in the fall of mountain-stream, or roar
" Of winds, is heard the angry spirit's yell;
" No wizard mutters the tremendous spell,
" Nor sinks convulsive in prophetic swoon;
" Nor bids the noise of drums and trumpets swell,
" To ease of fancied pangs the labouring moon,
" Or chace the shade that blots the blazing orb of noon.

the system of the universe;—in banishing superstition;—in promoting navigation, agriculture, medicine, and moral and political science;—from Stanza XLV. to Stanza LV.

XLVIII.

" Many a long-lingering year, in lonely isle,
" Stunn'd with th' eternal turbulence of waves,
" Lo, with dim eyes, that never learn'd to smile,
" And trembling hands, the famish'd native craves
" Of Heaven his wretched fare: shivering in caves,
" Or scorch'd on rocks, he pines from day to day;
" But Science gives the word; and lo, he braves
" The surge and tempest, lighted by her ray,
" And to a happier land wafts merrily away.

XLIX.

" And even where Nature loads the teeming plain
" With the full pomp of vegetable store,
" Her bounty, unimproved, is deadly bane:
" Dark woods and rankling wilds, from shore to shore,
" Stretch their enormous gloom; which to explore
" Even Fancy trembles, in her sprightliest mood;
" For there each eyeball gleams with lust of gore,
" Nestles each murderous and each monstrous brood,
" Plague lurks in every shade, and steams from every flood.

L.

" 'Twas from Philosophy man learn'd to tame
" The soil by plenty to intemperance fed.
" Lo, from the echoing ax, and thundering flame,
" Poison and plague and yelling rage are fled.
" The waters, bursting from their slimy bed,
" Bring health and melody to every vale:
" And, from the breezy main, and mountain's head,
" Ceres and Flora, to the sunny dale,
" To fan their glowing charms, invite the fluttering gale.

LI.

" What dire necessities on every hand
" Our art, or strength, our fortitude require!
" Of foes intestine what a numerous band
" Against this little throb of life conspire!
" Yet Science can elude their fatal ire
" A while, and turn aside Death's levell'd dart,
" Sooth the sharp pang, allay the fever's fire,
" And brace the nerves once more, and chear the heart,
" And yet a few soft nights and balmy days impart.

LII.

" Nor less to regulate man's moral frame
" Science exerts her all-composing sway.
" Flutters thy breast with fear, or pants for fame,
" Or pines to Indolence and Spleen a prey,
" Or Avarice, a fiend more fierce than they?
" Flee to the shade of Academus' grove;
" Where cares molest not, discord melts away
" In harmony, and the pure passions prove
" How sweet the words of truth breath'd from the lips of
" Love.

LIII.

" What cannot Art and Industry perform,
" When Science plans the progress of their toil!
" They smile at penury, disease, and storm;
" And oceans from their mighty mounds recoil.
" When tyrants scourge, or demagogues embroil
" A land, or when the rabble's headlong rage
" Order transforms to anarchy and spoil,
" Deep-versed in man the philosophic Sage
" Prepares with lenient hand their phrenzy to assuage.

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LVIII.

Of late, with cumbersome, though pompous show,
Edwin would oft his flowery rhyme deface,
Through ardour to adorn; but Nature now
To his experienced eye a modest grace
Presents, where Ornament the second place
Holds, to intrinsic worth and just design
Subservient still. Simplicity apace
Tempers his rage: he owns her charm divine,
And clears th' ambiguous phrase, and lops th' unwieldy line.

LIX.

Fain would I sing (much yet unsung remains)
What sweet delirium o'er his bosom stole,
When the great Shepherd of the Mantuan plains *
His deep majestic melody 'gan roll:
Fain would I sing, what transport storm'd his soul,
How the red current throbb'd his veins along,
When, like Pelides, bold beyond controul,
Gracefully terrible, sublimely strong,
Homer raised high to heaven the loud, th' impetuous song.

* Virgil.

LX.

And how his lyre, though rude her first essays,
Now skill'd to sooth, to triumph, to complain,
Warbling at will through each harmonious maze,
Was taught to modulate the artful strain,
I fain would sing:—but ah! I strive in vain.—
Sighs from a breaking heart my voice confound.—
With trembling step, to join yon weeping train,
I haste, where gleams funereal glare around,
And, mix'd with shrieks of wo, the knells of death resound.

LXI.

Adieu, ye lays, that Fancy's flowers adorn,
The soft amusement of the vacant mind!
He sleeps in dust, and all the Muses mourn,
He, whom each Virtue fired, each Grace refined,
Friend, teacher, pattern, darling of mankind! *—
He sleeps in dust.—Ah, how should I pursue
My theme!—To heart-consuming grief resign'd,
Here on his recent grave I fix my view,
And pour my bitter tears.—Ye flowery lays, adieu!

* This excellent person died suddenly, on the 10th of February, 1773. The conclusion of the poem was written a few days after.

LXII.

Art thou, my G*******, for ever fled!
And am I left to unavailing wo!
When fortune's storms assail this weary head,
Where cares long since have shed untimely snow,
Ah, now for comfort whither shall I go!
No more thy soothing voice my anguish chears:
Thy placid eyes with smiles no longer glow,
My hopes to cherish, and allay my fears.—
'Tis meet that I should mourn:—flow forth afresh my tears.

POEMS

ON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

POEMS
ON
SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

RETIREMENT.*

WHEN in the crimson cloud of Even,
The lingering light decays,
And Hesper on the front of heaven
His glittering gem displays;
Deep in the silent vale, unseen,
Beside a lulling stream,
A pensive Youth of placid mien,
Indulged this tender theme.

Ye cliffs, in hoary grandeur piled
High o'er the glimmering dale;
Ye woods, along whose windings wild
Murmurs the solemn gale;

* This, and most of the following pieces, are taken from a Collection of Juvenile Poems by the same hand, published many years ago. The Editor hopes they will be agreeable to his readers: but it was with difficulty he could prevail on the Author to consent to their being reprinted.

Where Melancholy strays forlorn,
And Wo retires to weep,
What time the wan moon's yellow horn
Gleams on the western deep:

To you, ye wastes, whose artless charms
Ne'er drew Ambition's eye,
Scaped a tumultuous world's alarms,
To your retreats I fly.
Deep in your most sequester'd bower
Let me at last recline,
Where Solitude, mild, modest Power,
Leans on her ivy'd shrine.

How shall I woo thee, matchless Fair!
Thy heavenly smile how win!
Thy smile, that smooths the brow of Care,
And stills the storm within.
O wilt thou to thy favourite grove
Thine ardent votary bring,
And bless his hours, and bid them move
Serene, on silent wing.

Oft let remembrance sooth his mind
With dreams of former days,
When in the lap of Peace reclined
He framed his infant lays;
When Fancy roved at large, nor Care
Nor cold Distrust alarm'd,
Nor Envy with malignant glare
His simple youth had harm'd.

'Twas then, O Solitude, to thee
His early vows were paid,
From heart sincere, and warm, and free,
Devoted to the shade.
Ah why did Fate his steps decoy
In stormy paths to roam,
Remote from all congenial joy!—
O take the Wanderer home.

Thy shades, thy silence, now be mine,
Thy charms my only theme;
My haunt the hollow cliff, whose pine
Waves o'er the gloomy stream,

Whence the scared owl on pinions grey
Breaks from the rustling boughs,
And down the lone vale sails away
To more profound repose.

O while to thee the woodland pours
Its wildly warbling song,
And balmy from the bank of flowers
The zephyr breathes along;
Let no rude sound invade from far,
No vagrant foot be nigh,
No ray from Grandeur's gilded car,
Flash on the startled eye.

But if some pilgrim through the glade
Thy hallow'd bowers explore,
O guard from harm his hoary head,
And listen to his lore;
For he of joys divine shall tell
That wean from earthly woe,
And triumph o'er the mighty spell
That chains this heart below.

For me no more the path invites
Ambition loves to tread;
No more I climb those toilsome heights
By guileful Hope misled;
Leaps my fond fluttering heart no more
To Mirth's enlivening strain;
For present pleasure soon is o'er,
And all the past is vain.

ELEGY.

STILL shall unthinking man substantial deem
The forms that fleet through life's deceitful dream?
On clouds, where Fancy's beam amusive plays,
Shall heedless Hope the towering fabric raise?
Till at Death's touch the fairy visions fly,
And real scenes rush dismal on the eye;
And from Elysium's balmy slumber torn
The startled soul awakes, to think, and mourn.

O ye, whose hours in jocund train advance,
Whose spirits to the song of gladness dance,
Who flowery vales in endless view survey
Glittering in beams of visionary day;
O, yet while Fate delays th' impending woe,
Be roused to thought, anticipate the blow;
Lest, like the lightning's glance, the sudden ill
Flash to confound, and penetrate to kill;
Lest, thus encompass'd with funereal gloom,
Like me, ye bend o'er some untimely tomb,

Pour your wild ravings in Night's frighted ear,
And half pronounce Heaven's sacred doom severe.
Wise, Beauteous, Good! O every grace combined,
That charms the eye, or captivates the mind!
Fair as the floweret opening on the morn,
Whose leaves bright drops of liquid pearl adorn!
Sweet, as the downy-pinion'd gale, that roves
To gather fragrance in Arabian groves!
Mild, as the strains, that, at the close of day,
Warbling remote, along the vales decay!——
Yet, why with these compared? What tints so fine,
What sweetness, mildness, can be match'd with thine?
Why roam abroad? Since still, to Fancy's eyes,
I see, I see thy lovely form arise.
Still let me gaze, and every care beguile,
Gaze on that cheek, where all the Graces smile;
That soul-expressing eye, benignly bright,
Where meekness beams ineffable delight;
That brow, where Wisdom sits enthroned serene,
Each feature forms, and dignifies the mien:
Still let me listen, while her words impart
The sweet effusions of the blameless heart,

Till all my soul, each tumult charm'd away,
Yields, gently led, to Virtue's easy sway.
By thee inspired, O Virtue, Age is young,
And music warbles from the faltering tongue:
Thy ray creative cheers the clouded brow,
And decks the faded cheek with rosy glow,
Brightens the joyless aspect, and supplies
Pure heavenly lustre to the languid eyes:
But when Youth's living bloom reflects thy beams,
Resistless on the view the glory streams,
Love, Wonder, Joy, alternately alarm,
And Beauty dazzles with angelic charm.
Ah whither fled!——ye dear illusions stay—
Lo, pale and silent lies the lovely clay.——
How are the roses on that cheek decay'd,
Which late the purple light of youth display'd!
Health on her form each sprightly grace bestow'd;
With life and thought each speaking feature glow'd.—
Fair was the flower, and soft the vernal sky;
Elate with hope, we deem'd no tempest nigh;
When lo, a whirlwind's instantaneous gust
Left all its beauties withering in the dust.

All cold the hand, that sooth'd Wo's weary head!
And quench'd the eye, the pitying tear that shed!
And mute the voice, whose pleasing accents stole,
Infusing balm, into the rankled soul!
O Death, why arm with cruelty thy power,
And spare the idle weed, yet lop the flower!
Why fly thy shafts in lawless error driven!
Is Virtue then no more the care of Heaven!——
But peace, bold thought! be still my bursting heart!
We, not ELIZA, felt the fatal dart.
Scaped the dark dungeon does the slave complain,
Nor bless the hand that broke the galling chain?
Say, pines not Virtue for the lingering morn,
On this dark wild condemn'd to roam forlorn?
Where Reason's meteor-rays, with sickly glow,
O'er the dun gloom a dreadful glimmering throw?
Disclosing dubious to th' affrighted eye
O'erwhelming mountains tottering from on high,
Black billowy seas in storm perpetual toss'd,
And weary ways in wildering labyrinths lost.
O happy stroke that bursts the bonds of clay,
Darts through the rending gloom the blaze of day,

And wings the soul with boundless flight to soar,
Where dangers threat, and fears alarm no more.
Transporting thought! here let me wipe away
The tear of grief, and wake a bolder lay.
But ah! the swimming eye o'erflows anew,
Nor check the sacred drops to pity due;
Lo, where in speechless, hopeless anguish, bend
O'er her loved dust, the Parent, Brother, Friend!
How vain the hope of man!—But cease thy strain,
Nor Sorrow's dread solemnity profane;
Mix'd with yon drooping Mourners, on her bier
In silence shed the sympathetic tear.

ODE TO HOPE.

I. 1.

O THOU, who glad'st the pensive soul,
More than Aurora's smile the swain forlorn,
Left all night long to mourn
Where desolation frowns, and tempests howl;
And shrieks of wo, as intermits the storm,
Far o'er the monstrous wilderness resound,
And cross the gloom darts many a shapeless form,
And many a fire-eyed visage glares around.
O come, and be once more my guest.
Come, for thou oft thy suppliant's vow hast heard,
And oft with smiles indulgent chear'd
And soothed him into rest.

I. 2.

Smit by thy rapture-beaming eye
Deep flashing through the midnight of their mind,
The sable bands combined,
Where Fear's black banner bloats the troubled sky,

Appall'd retire. Suspicion hides her head,
Nor dares th' obliquely gleaming eyeball raise;
Despair, with gorgon-figured veil o'erspread,
Speeds to dark Phlegethon's detested maze.
Lo, startled at the heavenly ray,
With speed unwonted Indolence upsprings,
And, heaving, lifts her leaden wings,
And sullen glides away:

I. 3.

Ten thousand forms, by pining Fancy view'd,
Dissolve.—Above the sparkling flood
When Phœbus rears his awful brow,
From lengthening lawn and valley low
The troops of fen-born mists retire.
Along the plain
The joyous swain
Eyes the gay villages again,
And gold-illumined spire;
While on the billowy ether borne
Floats the loose lay's jovial measure;
And light along the fairy Pleasure,
Her green robes glittering to the morn,

Wantons on silken wing. And goblins all
To the damp dungeon shrink, or hoary hall,
Or westward, with impetuous flight,
Shoot to the desart realms of their congenial Night.

II. 1.

When first on Childhood's eager gaze
Life's varied landscape, stretch'd immense around,
Starts out of night profound,
Thy voice incites to tempt th' untrodden maze.
Fond he surveys thy mild maternal face,
His bashful eye still kindling as he views,
And, while thy lenient arm supports his pace,
With beating heart the upland path pursues:
The path that leads, where, hung sublime,
And seen afar, youth's gallant trophies, bright
In Fancy's rainbow ray, invite
His wingy nerves to climb.

II. 2.

Pursue thy pleasurable way,
Safe in the guidance of thy heavenly guard,

While melting airs are heard,
And soft-eyed cherub forms around thee play:
Simplicity, in careless flowers array'd,
Prattling amusive in his accent meek;
And Modesty, half turning as afraid,
The smile just dimpling on his glowing cheek!
Content and Leisure, hand in hand
With Innocence and Peace, advance, and sing;
And Mirth, in many a mazy ring,
Frisks o'er the flowery land.

II. 3.

Frail man, how various is thy lot below!
To-day tho' gales propitious blow,
And Peace soft gliding down the sky
Lead Love along and Harmony,
To-morrow the gay scene deforms:
Then all around
The thunder's sound
Rolls rattling on through heaven's profound,
And down rush all the storms.
Ye days, that balmy influence shed,

When sweet Childhood, ever sprightly,
In paths of pleasure sported lightly,
Whither, ah whither are ye fled!
Ye cherub train, that brought him on his way,
O leave him not midst tumult and dismay;
For now youth's eminence he gains:
But what a weary length of lingering toil remains!

III. 1.

They shrink, they vanish into air.
Now Slander taints with pestilence the gale;
And mingling cries assail,
The wail of Wo, and groan of grim Despair.
Lo, wizard Envy from his serpent eye
Darts quick destruction in each baleful glance;
Pride smiling stern, and yellow Jealousy,
Frowning Disdain, and haggard Hate advance;
Behold, amidst the dire array,
Pale wither'd Care his giant-stature rears,
And lo, his iron hand prepares
To grasp its feeble prey.

III. 2.

Who now will guard bewilder'd youth
Safe from the fierce assault of hostile rage?
Such war can Virtue wage,
Virtue, that bears the sacred shield of Truth?
Alas! full oft on Guilt's victorious car
The spoils of Virtue are in triumph borne;
While the fair captive, mark'd with many a scar,
In lone obscurity, oppress'd, forlorn,
Resigns to tears her angel form.
Ill-fated youth, then whither wilt thou fly?
No friend, no shelter now is nigh.
And onward rolls the storm.

III. 3.

But whence the sudden beam that shoots along?
Why shrink aghast the hostile throng?
Lo, from amidst Affliction's night,
Hope bursts all radiant on the sight:
Her words the troubled bosom sooth.

" Why thus dismay'd?
" Though foes invade,
" Hope ne'er is wanting to their aid,
" Who tread the path of truth.
" 'Tis I, who smooth the rugged way,
" I, who close the eyes of Sorrow,
" And with glad visions of to-morrow
" Repair the weary soul's decay.
" When Death's cold touch thrills to the freezing heart,
" Dreams of heaven's opening glories I impart,
" Till the freed spirit springs on high
" In rapture too severe for weak Mortality."

PYGMÆO-GERANO-MACHIA:

THE BATTLE OF

THE PYGMIES AND CRANES.

From the Latin of Addison.

1762.

THE pygmy-people, and the feather'd train,
Mingling in mortal combat on the plain,
I sing. Ye Muses, favour my designs,
Lead on my squadrons, and arrange the lines;
The flashing swords and fluttering wings display,
And long bills nibbling in the bloody fray;
Cranes darting with disdain on tiny foes,
Conflicting birds and men, and war's unnumber'd woes.
The wars and woes of heroes six feet long
Have oft resounded in Pierian song.

Who has not heard of Colchos' golden fleece,
And Argo mann'd with all the flower of Greece?
Of Thebes' fell brethren, Theseus stern of face,
And Peleus' son unrival'd in the race,
Eneas founder of the Roman line,
And William glorious on the banks of Boyne?
Who has not learn'd to weep at Pompey's woes,
And over Blackmore's Epic page to doze?
'Tis I, who dare attempt unusual strains,
Of hosts unsung, and unfrequented plains;
The small shrill trump, and chiefs of little size,
And armies rushing down the darken'd skies.

Where India reddens to the early dawn,
Winds a deep vale from vulgar eye withdrawn:
Bosom'd in groves the lowly region lies,
And rocky mountains round the border rise.
Here, till the doom of Fate its fall decreed,
The empire flourish'd of the pygmy-breed;
Here Industry perform'd, and Genius plann'd,
And busy multitudes o'erspread the land.
But now to these lone bounds if pilgrim stray,
Tempting through craggy cliffs the desperate way,

He finds the puny mansion fallen to earth,
Its godlings mouldering on th' abandon'd hearth;
And starts, where small white bones are spread around,
" Or little footsteps lightly print the ground;"
While the proud crane her nest securely builds,
Chattering amid the desolated fields.
But different fates befel her hostile rage,
While reign'd, invincible through many an age,
The dreaded Pygmy: roused by war's alarms
Forth rush'd the madding Mannikin to arms.
Fierce to the field of death the hero flies;
The faint crane fluttering flaps the ground, and dies;
And by the victor borne (o'erwhelming load!)
With bloody bill loose-dangling marks the road.
And oft the wily dwarf in ambush lay,
And often made the callow young his prey;
With slaughter'd victims heap'd his board, and smiled
T' avenge the parent's trespass on the child.
Oft, where his feather'd foe had rear'd her nest,
And laid her eggs and household gods to rest,
Burning for blood, in terrible array,
The eighteen-inch militia burst their way.

All went to wreck; the infant foeman fell,
Whence scarce his chirping bill had broke the shell.
Loud uproar hence, and rage of arms arose,
And the fell rancour of encountering foes;
Hence dwarfs and cranes one general havoc whelms,
And Death's grim visage scares the pigmy-realms.
Not half so furious blazed the warlike fire
Of Mice, high theme of the Meonian lyre;
When bold to battle march'd th' accouter'd frogs,
And the deep tumult thunder'd through the bogs.
Pierced by the javelin bulrush on the shore
Here agonizing roll'd the mouse in gore;
And there the frog (a scene full sad to see!)
Shorn of one leg, slow sprawl'd along on three:
He vaults no more with vigorous hopes on high,
But mourns in hoarsest croaks his destiny.
And now the day of wo drew on apace,
A day of wo to all the pigmy-race,
When dwarfs were doom'd (but penitence was vain)
To rue each broken egg, and chicken slain.
For roused to vengeance by repeated wrong
From distant climes the long-bill'd regions throng:

From Strymon's lake, Cäyster's plashy meads,
And fens of Scythia green with rustling reeds;
From where the Danube winds through many a land,
And Mareotis laves th' Egyptian strand,
To rendezvous they waft on eager wing,
And wait assembled the returning spring.
Meanwhile they trim their plumes for length of flight,
Whet their keen beaks, and twisting claws, for fight;
Each crane the pygmy power in thought o'erturns,
And every bosom for the battle burns.

When genial gales the frozen air unbind,
The screaming legions wheel, and mount the wind.
Far in the sky they form their long array,
And land and ocean streteh'd immense survey
Deep deep beneath; and, triumphing in pride,
With clouds and winds commix'd, innumerous ride;
'Tis wild obstreperous clangour all, and heaven
Whirls, in tempestuous undulation driven.

Nor less th' alarm that shook the world below,
Where march'd in pomp of war th' embattled foe;
Where mannikins with haughty step advance,
And grasp the shield, and couch the quivering lance;

To right and left the lengthening lines they form,
And rank'd in deep array await the storm.
High in the midst the chieftain-dwarf was seen,
Of giant stature, and imperial mien.
Full twenty inches tall, he strode along,
And view'd with lofty eye the wondering throng;
And, while with many a scar his visage frown'd,
Bared his broad bosom, rough with many a wound
Of beaks and claws, disclosing to their sight
The glorious meed of high heroic might.
For with insatiate vengeance, he pursued,
And never-ending hate, the feathery brood.
Unhappy they, confiding in the length
Of horny beak, or talon's crooked strength,
Who durst abide his rage; the blade descends,
And from the panting trunk the pinion rends.
Laid low in dust the pinion waves no more,
The trunk disfigured stiffens in its gore.
What hosts of heroes fell beneath his force!
What heaps of chicken carnage mark'd his course!
How oft, O Strymon, thy lone banks along,
Did wailing echo waft the funeral song!

And now from far the mingling clamours rise,
Loud and more loud rebounding through the skies.
From skirt to skirt of heaven, with stormy sway,
A cloud rolls on, and darkens all the day.
Near and more near descends the dreadful shade,
And now in battailous array display'd,
On sounding wings, and screaming in their ire,
The cranes rush onward, and the fight require.
The pygmy warriors eye with fearless glare
The host thick swarming o'er the burthen'd air;
Thick swarming now, but to their native land
Doom'd to return a scanty straggling band.——
When sudden, darting down the depth of heaven,
Fierce on th' expecting foe the cranes are driven.
The kindling phrensy every bosom warms,
The region echoes to the crash of arms:
Loose feathers from the encountering armies fly,
And in careering whirlwinds mount the sky.
To breathe from toil upsprings the panting crane,
Then with fresh vigour downwards darts again.
Success in equal balance hovering hangs.
Here, on the sharp spear, mad with mortal pangs,

The bird transfix'd in bloody vortex whirls,
Yet fierce in death the threatening talon curls;
There, while the life-blood bubbles from his wound,
With little feet the pygmy beats the ground;
Deep from his breast the short short sob he draws,
And dying curses the keen-pointed claws.
Trembles the thundering field, thick cover'd o'er
With falchions, mangled wings, and streaming gore,
And pygmy arms, and beaks of ample size,
And here a claw, and there a finger lies.
Encompass'd round with heaps of slaughter'd foes,
All grim in blood the pygmy champion glows.
And on th' assailing host impetuous springs,
Careless of nibbling bills, and flapping wings;
And midst the tumult wheresoe'er he turns,
The battle with redoubled fury burns;
From every side th' avenging cranes amain
Throng, to o'erwhelm this terror of the plain.
When suddenly (for such the will of Jove)
A fowl enormous, sousing from above,
The gallant chieftain clutch'd, and, soaring high,
(Sad chance of battle!) bore him up the sky.

The cranes pursue, and clustering in a ring,
Chatter triumphant round the captive king.
But ah! what pangs each pygmy bosom wrung,
When, now to cranes a prey, on talons hung,
High in the clouds they saw their helpless lord,
His wriggling form still lessening as he soar'd.

Lo yet again with unabated rage
In mortal strife the mingling hosts engage.
The crane with darted bill assaults the foe,
Hovering; then wheels aloft to scape the blow:
The dwarf in anguish aims the vengeful wound;
But whirls in empty air the falchion round.

Such was the scene, when midst the loud alarms
Sublime th' eternal Thunderer rose in arms.
When Briareus, by mad ambition driven,
Heaved Pelion huge, and hurl'd it high at heaven.
Jove roll'd redoubling thunders from on high,
Mountains and bolts encounter'd in the sky;
Till one stupendous ruin whelm'd the crew,
Their vast limbs weltering wide in brimstone blue.

But now at length the pygmy legions yield,
And wing'd with terror fly the fatal field.

They raise a weak and melancholy wail,
All in distraction scattering o'er the vale.
Prone on their routed rear the cranes descend;
Their bills bite furious, and their talons rend:
With unrelenting ire they urge the chace,
Sworn to exterminate the hated race.

'Twas thus the Pygmy Name, once great in war,
For spoils of conquer'd cranes renown'd afar,
Perish'd. For, by the dread decree of Heaven,
Short is the date to earthly grandeur given,
And vain are all attempts to roam beyond
Where Fate has fix'd the everlasting bound.
Fallen are the trophies of Assyrian power,
And Persia's proud dominion is no more;
Yea, though to both superior far in fame,
Thine empire, Latium, is an empty name.

And now with lofty chiefs of ancient time,
The pygmy heroes roam th' Elysian clime.
Or, if belief to matron-tales be due,
Full oft, in the belated shepherd's view,
Their frisking forms, in gentle green array'd,
Gambol secure amid the moonlight glade.

Secure, for no alarming cranes molest,
And all their woes in long oblivion rest:
Down the deep dale, and narrow winding way,
They foot it featly, ranged in ringlets gay:
'Tis joy and frolick all, where'er they rove,
And Fairy-people is the name they love.

THE HARES,

A FABLE.

YES, yes, I grant the sons of earth
Are doom'd to trouble from their birth.
We all of sorrow have our share;
But say, is yours without compare?
Look round the world; perhaps you'll find
Each individual of our kind
Press'd with an equal load of ill,
Equal at least. Look further still,
And own your lamentable case
Is little short of happiness.
In yonder hut that stands alone
Attend to Famine's feeble moan;
Or view the couch where Sickness lies,
Mark his pale cheek, and languid eyes,
His frame by strong convulsion torn,
His struggling sighs, and looks forlorn.

Or see, transfix'd with keener pangs,
Where o'er his hoard the miser hangs;
Whistles the wind; he starts, he stares,
Nor Slumber's balmy blessing shares;
Despair, Remorse, and Terror roll
Their tempests on his harass'd soul.
But here perhaps it may avail
T' enforce our reasoning with a tale.
Mild was the morn, the sky serene,
The jolly hunting band convene,
The beagle's breast with ardour burns,
The bounding steed the champaign spurns,
And Fancy oft the game descries
Through the hound's nose, and huntsman's eyes.
Just then, a council of the hares
Had met, on national affairs.
The chiefs were set; while o'er their head
The furze its frizzled covering spread.
Long lists of grievances were heard,
And general discontent appear'd.
" Our harmless race shall every savage
" Both quadruped and biped ravage?

" Shall horses, hounds, and hunters still
" Unite their wits to work us ill?
" The youth, his parent's sole delight,
" Whose tooth the dewy lawns invite,
" Whose pulse in every vein beats strong,
" Whose limbs leap light the vales along,
" May yet ere noontide meet his death,
" And lie dismember'd on the heath.
" For youth, alas, nor cautious age,
" Nor strength, nor speed, eludes their rage.
" In every field we meet the foe,
" Each gale comes fraught with sounds of wo;
" The morning but awakes our fears,
" The evening sees us bathed in tears.
" But must we ever idly grieve,
" Nor strive our fortunes to relieve?
" Small is each individual's force:
" To stratagem be our recourse;
" And then, from all our tribes combined,
" The murderer to his cost may find
" No foes are weak, whom Justice arms,
" Whom Concord leads, and Hatred warms.

" Be roused; or liberty acquire,
" Or in the great attempt expire."
He said no more, for in his breast
Conflicting thoughts the voice suppress'd:
The fire of vengeance seem'd to stream
From his swoln eyeball's yellow gleam.
And now the tumults of the war,
Mingling confusedly from afar,
Swell in the wind. Now louder cries
Distinct of hounds and men arise.
Forth from the brake, with beating heart,
Th' assembled hares tumultuous start,
And, every straining nerve on wing,
Away precipitately spring.
The hunting band, a signal given,
Thick thundering o'er the plain are driven;
O'er cliff abrupt, and shrubby mound,
And river broad, impetuous bound;
Now plunge amid the forest shades,
Glance through the openings of the glades;
Now o'er the level valley sweep,
Now with short steps strain up the steep;

While backward from the hunter's eyes
The landscape like a torrent flies.
At last an antient wood they gain'd,
By pruner's ax yet unprofaned.
High o'er the rest, by Nature rear'd,
The oak's majestick boughs appear'd;
Beneath, a copse of various hue
In barbarous luxuriance grew.
No knife had curb'd the rambling sprays,
No hand had wove th' implicit maze.
The flowering thorn, self-taught to wind,
The hazle's stubborn stem intwined,
And bramble twigs were wreath'd around,
And rough furze crept along the ground.
Here sheltering, from the sons of murther,
The hares drag their tired limbs no further.
But lo, the western wind erelong
Was loud, and roar'd the woods among;
From rustling leaves, and crashing boughs,
The sound of wo and war arose.
The hares distracted scour the grove,
As terror and amazement drove;

But danger, whereso'er they fled,
Still seem'd impending o'er their head.
Now crouded in a grotto's gloom,
All hope extinct, they wait their doom.
Dire was the silence, till, at length,
Even from despair deriving strength,
With bloody eye, and furious look,
A daring youth arose, and spoke.

" O wretched race, the scorn of Fate,
" Whom ills of every sort await!
" O, cursed with keenest sense to feel
" The sharpest sting of every ill!
" Say ye, who, fraught with mighty scheme,
" Of liberty and vengeance dream,
" What now remains? To what recess
" Shall we our weary steps address,
" Since fate is evermore pursuing
" All ways, and means to work our ruin?
" Are we alone, of all beneath,
" Condemn'd to misery worse than death!
" Must we, with fruitless labour, strive
" In misery worse than death to live!

No. Be the smaller ill our choice:
'So dictates Nature's powerful voice.
"Death's pang will in a moment cease;
"And then, All hail, eternal peace!"
Thus while he spoke, his words impart
The dire resolve to every heart.

A distant lake in prospect lay,
That glittering in the solar ray,
Gleam'd through the dusky trees, and shot
A trembling light along the grot.
Thither with one consent they bend,
Their sorrows with their lives to end,
While each, in thought, already hears
The water hissing in his ears.

Fast by the margin of the lake,
Conceal'd within a thorny brake,
A Linnet sate, whose careless lay
Amused the solitary day.
Careless he sung, for on his breast
Sorrow no lasting trace impress'd;
When suddenly he heard a sound
Of swift feet traversing the ground.

Quick to the neighbouring tree he flies,
Thence trembling casts around his eyes;
No foe appear'd, his fears were vain;
Pleased he renews the sprightly strain.
The hares, whose noise had caused his fright,
Saw with surprise the linnet's flight.
Is there on earth a wretch, they said,
Whom our approach can strike with dread?
An instantaneous change of thought
To tumult every bosom wrought.
So fares the system-building sage,
Who, plodding on from youth to age,
At last on some foundation-dream
Has rear'd aloft his goodly scheme,
And proved his predecessors fools,
And bound all nature by his rules;
So fares he in that dreadful hour,
When injured Truth exerts her power,
Some new phenomenon to raise;
Which, bursting on his frighted gaze,
From its proud summit to the ground
Proves the whole edifice unsound.

" Children," thus spoke a hare sedate,
Who oft had known th' extremes of fate,
" In slight events the docile mind
" May hints of good instruction find.
" That our condition is the worst,
" And we with such misfortunes cursed
" As all comparison defy,
" Was late the universal cry.
" When lo, an accident so slight
" As yonder little linnet's flight,
" Has made your stubborn heart confess
" (So your amazement bids me guess)
" That all our load of woes and fears
" Is but a part of what he bears.
" Where can he rest secure from harms,
" Whom even a helpless hare alarms?
" Yet he repines not at his lot,
" When past the danger is forgot:
" On yonder bough he trims his wings,
" And with unusual rapture sings;
" While we, less wretched, sink beneath
" Our lighter ills, and rush to death.

" No more of this unmeaning rage,
" But hear, my friends, the words of age.
" When by the winds of autumn driven
" The scatter'd clouds fly cross the heaven,
" Oft have we, from some mountain's head,
" Beheld th' alternate light and shade
" Sweep the long vale. Here hovering lowers
" The shadowy cloud; there downwards pours,
" Streaming direct, a flood of day,
" Which from the view flies swift away;
" It flies, while other shades advance,
" And other streaks of sunshine glance.
" Thus chequer'd is the life below
" With gleams of joy, and clouds of wo.
" Then hope not, while we journey on,
" Still to be basking in the sun:
" Nor fear, though now in shades ye mourn,
" That sunshine will no more return.
" If, by your terrors overcome,
" Ye fly before th' approaching gloom,
" The rapid clouds your flight pursue,
" And darkness still o'ercasts your view.

" Who longs to reach the radiant plain
" Must onward urge his course amain;
" For doubly swift the shadow flies,
" When 'gainst the gale the pilgrim plies.
" At least be firm, and undismay'd
" Maintain your ground! the fleeting shade
" Erelong spontaneous glides away,
" And gives you back th' enlivening ray.
" Lo, while I speak, our danger past!
" No more the shrill horn's angry blast
" Howls in our ear; the savage roar
" Of war and murder is no more.
" Then snatch the moment fate allows,
" Nor think of past or future woes."
He spoke; and hope revives; the lake
That instant one and all forsake,
In sweet amusement to employ
The present sprightly hour of joy.
Now from the western mountain's brow
Compass'd with clouds of various glow,
The sun a broader orb displays,
And shoots aslope his ruddy rays.

The lawn assumes a fresher green,
And dew-drops spangle all the scene.
The balmy zephyr breathes along,
The shepherd sings his tender song,
With all their lays the groves resound,
And falling waters murmur round.
Discord and care were put to flight,
And all was peace, and calm delight.

EPITAPH:

BEING PART OF AN INSCRIPTION FOR A MONUMENT TO BE ERECTED BY A GENTLEMAN TO THE MEMORY OF HIS LADY.

FAREWELL, my best-beloved; whose heavenly mind
Genius with virtue, strength with softness join'd;
Devotion, undebased by pride or art,
With meek simplicity, and joy of heart;
Though sprightly, gentle; though polite, sincere;
And only of thyself a judge severe;
Unblamed, unequal'd in each sphere of life,
The tenderest Daughter, Sister, Parent, Wife.
In thee their Patroness th' afflicted lost;
Thy friends, their pattern, ornament, and boast;
And I—but ah, can words my loss declare,
Or paint th' extremes of transport and despair!
O Thou, beyond what verse or speech can tell,
My guide, my friend, my best-beloved, farewell!

ODE

ON LORD H**'s BIRTH-DAY.

A MUSE, unskill'd in venal praise,
Unstain'd with flattery's art;
Who loves simplicity of lays
Breathed ardent from the heart;
While gratitude and joy inspire,
Resumes the long-unpractised lyre,
To hail, O H**, thy Natal Morn:
No gaudy wreathe of flower's she weaves,
But twines with oak the laurel leaves,
Thy cradle to adorn.

For not on beds of gaudy flowers
Thine ancestors reclined,
Where Sloth dissolves, and Spleen devours
All energy of mind.

To hurl the dart, to ride the car,
To stem the deluges of war,
And snatch from fate a sinking land;
Trample th' Invader's lofty crest,
And from his grasp the dagger wrest,
And desolating brand:

'Twas this, that raised th' illustrious Line
To match the first in fame!
A thousand years have seen it shine
With unabated flame.
Have seen thy mighty Sires appear
Foremost in Glory's high career,
The pride and pattern of the Brave.
Yet, pure from lust of blood their fire,
And from Ambition's wild desire,
They triumph'd but to save.

The Muse with joy attends their way
The vale of peace along;
There to its Lord the village gay
Renews the grateful song.

Yon castle's glittering towers contain
No pit of wo, nor clanking chain,
Nor to the suppliant's wail resound;
The open doors the needy bless,
Th' unfriended hail their calm recess,
And gladness smiles around.

There to the sympathetick heart
Life's best delights belong,
To mitigate the mourner's smart,
To guard the weak from wrong.
Ye Sons of Luxury, be wise:
Know, happiness for ever flies
The cold and solitary breast;
Then let the social instinct glow,
And learn to feel another's wo,
And in his joy be blessed.

O yet, ere Pleasure plant her snare
For unsuspecting youth;
Ere Flattery her song prepare
To check the voice of Truth;

O may his country's guardian Power
Attend the slumbering Infant's bower,
And bright, inspiring dreams impart;
To rouse th' hereditary fire,
To kindle each sublime desire,
Exalt, and warm the heart.

Swift to reward a Parent's fears,
A Parent's hopes to crown,
Roll on in peace, ye blooming years,
That rear him to renown;
When in his finish'd form and face
Admiring multitudes shall trace
Each patrimonial charm combined,
The courteous yet majestick mien,
The liberal smile, the look serene,
The great and gentle mind.

Yet, though thou draw a nation's eyes,
And win a nation's love,
Let not thy towering mind despise
The village and the grove.

No slander there shall wound thy fame,
No ruffian take his deadly aim,
No rival weave the secret snare:
For Innocence with angel smile,
Simplicity that knows no guile,
And Love and Peace are there.

When winds the mountain oak assail,
And lay its glories waste,
Content may slumber in the vale,
Unconscious of the blast.
Through scenes of tumult while we roam,
The heart, alas! is ne'er at home,
It hopes in time to roam no more;
The mariner, not vainly brave,
Combats the storm, and rides the wave,
To rest at last on shore.

Ye proud, ye selfish, ye severe,
How vain your mask of state!
The good alone have joy sincere,
The good alone are great:

Great, when, amid the vale of peace,
They bid the plaint of sorrow cease,
And hear the voice of artless praise;
As when along the trophy'd plain
Sublime they lead the victor train,
While shouting nations gaze.

TO THE

RIGHT HON. LADY CHARLOTTE GORDON,

DRESSED IN A TARTAN SCOTCH BONNET WITH PLUMES, &c.

WHY, Lady, wilt thou bind thy lovely brow
With the dread semblance of that warlike helm,
That nodding plume, and wreathe of various glow,
That graced the chiefs of Scotia's antient realm?

Thou knowest that virtue is of power the source,
And all her magick to thy eyes is given;
We own their empire, while we feel their force,
Beaming with the benignity of heaven.

The plumy helmet, and the martial mien,
Might dignify Minerva's awful charms;
But more resistless far th' Idalian queen—
Smiles, graces, gentleness, her only arms.

THE HERMIT.

AT the close of the day, when the hamlet is still,
And mortals the sweets of forgetfulness prove,
When nought but the torrent is heard on the hill,
And nought but the nightingale's song in the grove:
'Twas thus, by the cave of the mountain afar,
While his harp rung symphonious, a Hermit began;
No more with himself or with nature at war,
He thought as a Sage, though he felt as a Man.

"Ah why, all abandon'd to darkness and wo,
"Why, lone Philomela, that languishing fall?
"For Spring shall return, and a lover bestow,
"And Sorrow no longer thy bosom inthral.
"But, if pity inspire thee, renew the sad lay,
"Mourn, sweetest complainer, man calls thee to mourn;
"O soothe him, whose pleasures like thine pass away:
"Full quickly they pass—but they never return.

" Now gliding remote, on the verge of the sky,
" The Moon half extinguish'd her crescent displays:
" But lately I mark'd, when majestick on high
" She shone, and the planets were lost in her blaze.
" Roll on, thou fair orb, and with gladness pursue
" The path that conducts thee to splendor again.
" But Man's faded glory what change shall renew!
" Ah fool! to exult in a glory so vain!

" 'Tis night, and the landscape is lovely no more;
" I mourn, but, ye woodlands, I mourn not for you;
" For morn is approaching, your charms to restore,
" Perfumed with fresh fragrance, and glittering with dew.
" Nor yet for the ravage of winter I mourn;
" Kind Nature the embryo blossom will save.
" But when shall Spring visit the mouldering urn!
" O when shall it dawn on the night of the grave!"

' 'Twas thus, by the glare of false Science betray'd,
' That leads, to bewilder; and dazzles, to blind;
' My thoughts wont to roam, from shade onward to shade,
' Destruction before me, and sorrow behind.

" O pity, great Father of light," then I cry'd,
" Thy creature who fain would not wander from Thee!
" Lo, humbled in dust, I relinquish my pride:
" From doubt and from darkness thou only canst free."

' And darkness and doubt are now flying away.
' No longer I roam in conjecture forlorn.
' So breaks on the traveller, faint, and astray,
' The bright and the balmy effulgence of morn.
' See Truth, Love, and Mercy, in triumph descending,
' And Nature all glowing in Eden's first bloom!
' On the cold cheek of Death smiles and roses are blending,
' And Beauty Immortal awakes from the tomb.'